

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Please add new claim 28, cancel claims 8-10, 13-19 and 21-27, and amend claims 1, 6, 7 and 20 as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A surgical knife safety handle device for both ophthalmic and non-ophthalmic applications, comprising:

a handle body having a distal end, a proximal end and a substantially cylindrical housing extending along a longitudinal axis between said distal and proximal ends, said cylindrical housing defining a chamber therein and having at least one slot extending along said longitudinal axis accessing said chamber, said chamber open at said distal end of said handle body;

a knife holder at said distal end of said handle body having a post extending from said distal end of said handle body along said longitudinal axis; and

a movable guard engaged with a guard positioning mechanism for longitudinal movement between a fully extended position and a fully retracted position with respect to said handle body, said guard having a proximal end, and a an-enlarged distal end for at least partially enclosing a knife blade attachable to said knife holder, and a guard body extending along a longitudinal axis between said distal and proximal ends of said guard; ~~and~~

said guard positioning mechanism slidably mounted in said chamber and having a user control mechanism extending from within said chamber via said slot and a pushback prevention mechanism, the pushback prevention mechanism comprising:

at least one flange of a plurality extending from said proximal end of said guard and having a raised inner lip about an inside circumference of said flange, said plurality creating an opening at said proximal end of said guard to engage a pin;

said pin extending from a distal end of said guard positioning mechanism and having a groove about an outside circumference of said pin and having a taper, wherein said

engagement between said guard and said guard positioning mechanism disposes said raised inner lip within said groove; and

at least one flange of said plurality having a raised surface to engage said taper, said engagement deflecting said at least one flange outward from said axis of said pin and into a third detent in said chamber, said engagement between said at least one flange and said third detent restricting said slidable movement of said guard relative to said handle body.

2. (Original) A surgical knife safety handle device for both ophthalmic and non-ophthalmic applications as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said knife holder is partially disposed within said chamber opening at said distal end of said handle body to define a substantially semicircular opening about said knife holder and accessing said chamber.

3. (Original) A surgical knife safety handle device for both ophthalmic and non-ophthalmic applications as claimed in claim 2, wherein:

said moveable guard comprises a semicircular guard body slidably extendable from said semicircular opening about said holder.

4. (Original) A surgical knife safety handle device for both ophthalmic and non-ophthalmic applications as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said guard comprises an enlarged partially semicircular distal end and tapering to a semicircular guard body.

5. (Original) A surgical knife safety handle device for both ophthalmic and non-ophthalmic applications as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said guard is partially disposed in said chamber for longitudinal movement with respect to said handle body.

6. (Currently Amended) A surgical knife safety handle device for both ophthalmic and non-ophthalmic applications as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said distal end of said handle body includes a semicircular relief for receiving said ~~enlarged~~ distal end of said guard when said guard is in said fully retracted position, said semicircular relief allowing access to said ~~enlarged~~ distal end of said guard.

7. (Currently Amended) A surgical knife safety handle device for both ophthalmic and non-ophthalmic applications as claimed in claim 6, wherein:

said access to said ~~enlarged~~ distal end of said guard provides user orientation and orientation control of said device.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Original) A surgical knife safety handle device for both ophthalmic and non-ophthalmic applications as claimed in claim 1, wherein said guard positioning mechanism further includes a position locking mechanism, the locking mechanism comprising:

a leaf spring positioned within said guard positioning mechanism to engage a first detent at said fully extended position and to engage a second detent at said fully retracted position; and

said chamber including said first and second detents to engage said leaf spring as said guard positioning mechanism is slidably moved within said chamber between said fully extended position and said fully retracted position with respect to said handle body.

12. (Original) A surgical knife safety handle device for both ophthalmic and non-ophthalmic applications as claimed in claim 11, wherein:

said engagement between said leaf spring and said first and second detent provides at least one of a tactile feedback and an audible feedback to a user.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) A surgical knife safety handle device guard pushback prevention mechanism, the pushback prevention mechanism comprising:

a handle body having a distal end, a proximal end and a substantially cylindrical housing extending along a longitudinal axis between said distal and proximal ends, said cylindrical housing defining a chamber therein;

a movable guard engaged with a guard positioning mechanism for longitudinal movement between a fully extended position and a fully retracted position with respect to said handle body, said guard having a proximal end, and ~~a an-enlarged~~ distal end, said guard positioning mechanism slidably mounted in said chamber;

at least one flange of a plurality extending from said proximal end of said guard and having a raised inner lip about an inside circumference of said flange, said plurality creating an opening at said proximal end of said guard to engage a pin;

said pin extending from a distal end of said guard positioning mechanism and having a groove about an outside circumference of said pin and having a taper, wherein said engagement between said guard and said guard positioning mechanism disposes said raised inner lip within said groove; and

at least one flange of said plurality having a raised surface to engage said taper, said engagement deflecting said at least one flange outward from said axis of said pin and into a third detent in said chamber, said engagement between said at least one flange and said third detent restricting said slidable movement of said guard relative to said handle body.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Cancelled)

28. (New) A surgical knife safety handle device guard pushback prevention mechanism, the pushback prevention mechanism comprising:

a handle body having a distal end, a proximal end and a housing extending along a longitudinal axis between said distal and proximal ends, said housing defining a chamber therein;

a movable guard engaged with a guard positioning mechanism for longitudinal movement between a fully extended position and a fully retracted position with respect to said handle body, said guard having a proximal end, and a distal end, said guard positioning mechanism slidably mounted in said chamber;

at least one flange of a plurality extending from said proximal end of said guard and having a raised inner lip about an inside circumference of said flange, said plurality creating an opening at said proximal end of said guard to engage a pin;

said pin extending from a distal end of said guard positioning mechanism and having a groove about an outside circumference of said pin and having a taper, wherein said engagement between said guard and said guard positioning mechanism disposes said raised inner lip within said groove; and

at least one flange of said plurality having a raised surface to engage said taper, said engagement deflecting said at least one flange outward from said axis of said pin and into a third detent in said chamber, said engagement between said at least one flange and said third detent restricting said slidable movement of said guard relative to said handle body.